M. 1606 (1)

A PARAPHRASE AND EXPOSITION of the Propheſie of SAINT *PETER*,

Concerning the day of CHRIST'S ſecond Coming,

Deſcribed in the third Chapter of his ſecond EPISTLE.

AS ALSO,

How the CONFLAGRATION, *or* Deſtruction of the WORLD by fire, (whereof Saint *Peter* ſpeaks) and eſpecially of the HEAVENS, is to be underſtood.

BY

JOSEPH MEDE, B. D. late Fellow of Chriſts Colledge in Cambridg.

The ſecond Edition corrected and amended.

LONDON,

Printed by *R. Leybourn*, for SAMUEL MAN, dwelling at the ſign of the Swan in Pauls Church-yard. 1649.

A PARAPHRASE
AND
EXPOSITION
OF THE
EPISTLE
OF
SAINT JUDE.

A PARAPHRASE AND EXPOSITION

of the Propheſie of

SAINT *PETER*,

Concerning the day of *CHRISTS* ſecond Coming,

On the third Chapter of the ſecond EPISTLE.

Verſe 1, 2.

SAint Peter exhorts the believing Jews, unto whom he writes to be mindful of the words of the holy Prophets, (a) Eſay, Daniel, & Malachi, *concerning the coming of Chriſt to judgment, & the reſtauration then promiſed, it being alſo confirmed by the Apoſtles of our Lord and Savionr.*

(a) IF that which St. *Peter* here deſcribeth were foretold by the old Prophets, then muſt Saint *Peter* be ſo expounded, as it may be ſhewen in them, and agree with them.

Verse. 3, 4.

For howsoever it were then believed both by Jews & Christianed Gentiles, yet in the last dayes should come those, who walking after their own desires (or humours) should deny and deride the expectation of any such promise (b) *of that day of Christ, saying, Where is the promise* (c) *of his coming? Where is the new heaven and new earth you talk of?*

(b) This ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων, or *last dayes*, should seem to be the time of the Churches Apostasie under Antichrist, according to that of Saint *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. *In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of errour, & doctrines of demons.* For as the times of the fourth and last of *Daniels* Kingdoms were the last times in general, during which Christ was to come, and found his Church and Kingdome: So the latter times of the fourth Kingdome, being the period of a time, times, and halfe a time, wherein the wicked horne should domineere, are the latemost times of the last times, or last times in speciall.

(c) I take *Promise* here for *res promissa*, the *antithesis* implying that to be the meaning, *viz. The scoffers say, Where is the promise of his coming? Nevertheless we look for a new heaven, and a new earth, according to his promise.* But here is somewhat, (Reader) in the application wherein thou maist erre; but be not thou uncharitable in thy censure, nor thinke that I am. For although the crying down and condemning the opinion of the *Chiliasts*, will be found to be neere upon the beginning of the times of the Antichristian Apostasie, (which I suppose to be called the last times;) and that the utter burying of that opinion falls within these times: yet thou must know, first, That there is not the like reason of the first Authors of crying down a truth,

truth, and of thoſe, who led by their authority, take it afterwards, without further examination, for an errour. Secondly, to ſcoffe, is one thing, and barely not to beleeve, is another. Thirdly, it is one thing to deny a promiſe ſimply, and another to deny and queſtion the manner thereof: as alſo, to reject a truth ſincerely propounded, and when it is entangled with errours, as that of the later *Chiliaſt* may ſeem to have been.

Verſe 4. *pars altera.*

The reaſon of this their unbelief being, becauſe they imagine, there hath never yet, ſince the creation of the world, been any example of ſuch a deſtruction and change enſuing it, as this at the coming of Chriſt ſhould be. For ſince the Fathers fell aſleep (ſay they) even ſince Adam died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of the creation. Therfore the expectation of any ſuch change of the world, & the ſtate of things therein (as is ſuppoſed) is vain and frivolous, and never to be fulfilled.

Touching the Jews, and the impeachment of this opinion amongſt them in the later times, I find amongſt the Doctors of the *Gemara*, or gloſſe of their *Talmud*, (which was finiſhed about 500 yeers after Chriſt) a tenet of one *R. Samuels*, אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שעבוד מלכיות בלבד: That there was to be no difference between the preſent ſtate of the world, and the dayes of Meſſiah, but in regard of the bondage under the kingdoms of the Gentiles onely; thereby oppoſing the more ancient opinion and tradition of the renovation of the world. After this time there appears to have been amongſt the Jews a ſect of the followers of the opinion of this *R. Samuel*, which at length was greatly advanced by the authority of

learned *Maimonides*, who having drunk too deep of the Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*, (wherein he was admirably skilfull) became a champion againſt the opinion of the worlds renovation to be in the dayes of Meſſiah, and that upon this ground, *Quod mundus retinet & ſequitur conſuetudinem ſuam*; which ſaying he aſcribeth to ſome other Rabbins of the ſame opinion before him, which for the ſenſe and meaning is the ſelf ſame with that here of the ſcoffers: *All things* (ſay they) *continue, as they were from the beginning of the creation.* Nevertheleſs *Aben Ezra*, who livid not long after *Maimonides*, maintained ſtill (as alſo others did) the contrary; & there are extant certain diſcourſes and tractates amongſt them, purpoſely written of this argument, and confuting the opinion of *Rambam* and his followers; as one called שבים חדשים *dæli novi*, proving the neceſſity of the renovation of the world, and directed againſt *cap.* 29. *lib.* 2. of *Maimonides* his *More Nebochim*. Another by *R. Iſaac Abarbinel*, מעלות אלהים *Opera Dei*, (out of *Pſal.* 66. 5.) wherein all the arguments brought againſt the renovation are confuted. And no doubt there are more of the like nature, which we know not of.

Verſe 5, 6.

But thoſe who ſuppoſe this (ἢ τὸ θέλημα) *that there hath never yet any ſuch deſtruction or change befallen the creation, and thence conclude, there is nor ſhall ſuch ever be; they weigh and conſider not the univerſal deluge in the time of* Noah, *(when the curſes laid upon the creature for mans ſin*

firſt

first solemnly tooke place,) brought as a like destruction, so a like change upon the world for the degeneration of the creature, as this at the second coming of Christ shall be for the restauration & renovation of the same in the glorious liberty of the children of God. For the heavens were of old, and the globe of the earth, consisting partly (ἐξ ὕδατος) *of water*, viz. *that of the great deep; & partly* (διὰ ὕδατος) *amongst* (d) *water, to wit, the clouds and flood-gates of heaven hanging about it, all framed by the word of God: By the which waters* (δι' ὧν ὕδατων) *the world which then was, being overwhelmed with water, perished; as it is written* Gen. 7. 11. seq. *in the* 600. *yeer of* Noahs *life, in the second moneth, in the seventeenth day of the moneth were al the fountains of the great deep broken up*, & vers. 18. *and the waters*, & 21. *and all flesh died.*

Verse 7.

But the heavens and the earth (i. e. the world) *which is now*,

(d) Διὰ sometimes signifies *inter, amongst*, or *in the midst of*, as if it were διὰ μέσου. So *Herodotus*, Διὰ νήσων, *inter insulas*. Howsoever we render the Prepositon, I suppose S. *Peter* by his διὰ ὕδατος means the superiour water, which together with that of the sea, or great deep, concurred to the drowning of the world, as appears by the place of *Genesis* alleaged.

by

by the same word are kept in store, *reserved unto fire* (e) *at the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, according to the Prophesie of* Daniel, *c.7. who saw a fiery stream issuing and coming forth before the Judge of the world, & the body of the fourth beast burned therewith: And of* Esay, *c.66. who saith of that day, That the Lord shall come with fire, & with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire: And that by fire and by his sword,* (i.e. by his sword of fire, ἐν διὰ δυοῖν) *the Lord would plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. So also* Malachy cap. 4. *That the great and terrible day shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, which at the coming of that day* (f) *shall be burnt up.*

Verse 8.

But wher as I mentioned (saith Saint *Peter*) *the day of judgment, lest ye might mistake it*

(e) From this proportion which the judgment to come by fire, hath unto that which was by water in the deluge, *Irenæus* cals it *Diluvium ignis, lib. 5. c. 29. juxta edit. Fevardentii.*

(f) It may be it is of this day that the Prophet *Esay* also speaks, *cap. 9. 5.* where he saith, that the battel of the Messiah should not be as the *battel of the warriour, with*

for

for a ſhort day, or a day of few hours, I would not, Beloved, have you ignorant, that one day (g) with the Lord is as a thouſand yeers, & a thouſand yeers as one day.

confuſed noiſe, and garments rolled in bloud, but with burning and fuel of fire. For the old Prophets for the moſt part ſpeak of the coming of Chriſt indefinitely and in general, without that diſtinction of firſt and ſecond coming, which the Goſpel out of *Daniel* hath more clearly taught us: And ſo conſequently they ſpake of the things to be at Chriſts coming indefinitely and altogether, which we who are now more fully informed by the Revelation of the Goſpel, of a twofold coming, muſt apply each of them to his proper time: thoſe things which befit the ſtate of his firſt coming, unto it, and ſuch things as befit the ſtate of his ſecond coming, to the ſecond; and what befits both alike, may be applyed unto both.

(g) Thus I expound theſe words by way of pre-occupation or premunition, becauſe they are the formal words of the Jewiſh Doctors, when they ſpeak of the day of judgment, or day of Chriſt, as Saint *Peter* here doth, *viz.* יום אחד לפני המקום כאלף שנים *unus dies Dei S. B. ſicut mille anni.* And though they uſe to quote that of the ninth Pſalm, *(mille anni in oculis tuis ut dies heſternus)* for confirmation thereof, yet are not theſe words formally in the Pſalm. So that St. *Peter* in this paſſage ſeems rather to have had reſpect to that common ſaying of the Jews in this argument, than to the words of the Pſalm; where the words *(one day with the Lord is as a thouſand yeers)* are not, though the latter part of the ſentence *(a thouſand yeers as one day)* may allude thither; as the Jews alſo were wont to bring it, for a confirmation of the former. These words are commonly taken as an argument, why God ſhould not be

Pſ. 90. 4.

thought slack in his promise (which follows in the next verse: But the first Fathers took it otherwise; and besides, it proveth it not: for the question is not, whether the time be long or short in respect of God; but whether it be long or short in respect of us; otherwise not 1000, but 100000 yeers are in the eyes of God no more than one day is to us, and so it would not seem long to God, if the day of judgment should be deferred till then. 3 Let the judicious consider it, whether this passage so prone to be taken in the exposition I have given, yea, and alledged to that purpose, were not some part of a motive to the zelotical *Anti-Chiliasts* (whereof *Eusebius*, whom we trust was none of the least) to be so willing and ready to question the authority of this Epistle, as they did also at the same time of the *Apocalyps*. The pretence against this Epistle was, that it wanted the testimonie of allegation by the first Fathers. But (*Dies Domini sicut mille anni*) quoted both by *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus*, is not out of the ninth Psalm, as they took for granted, (for there are no such words, but out of the Epistle of *Peter*, who applyeth it to the day of judgment, which he calleth *Dies Domini*, ἡμέρα Κυρίου: Consider it.

ps. 90. 4.

Verse 9.

And though this day be deferred, yet is the Lord not slack concerning his promise, (as some men account slackness, as if he had alter'd his purpose, or meant never to performe it) but the cause of this delay, is his long-suffering (a) *towards us of the seed of Israel, not wil-*

(a) Saint *Peter* speaks and writes in this Epistle to his

ling

ling that any should perish at that day, but that the whole nation should come unto repentance, (b) *which, if that day should surprize them in their unbelief, must inevitably perish with the rest of the enemies of Christ.*

brethren the Jewes, as appears by the first verse of this chapter.

(b) So the same Saint *Peter* in his first publick Sermon to his Nation in the Temple, after the sending of the holy Ghost (*Act.* 3. 19, &c.) exhorts them to repent and be converted εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν, for the washing away of their sins, that so (ὅπως ἄν) those times of refreshing and restitution of all things which God had spoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets, might come, which till then were to be suspended.

Object. But God could have hastened the Jewes conversion, if it had pleased him.

Resp. But it stood with the œconomy of Gods justice, when the Jewes had rejected Christ, their expiation, to grant them this grace, until they should have fulfilled a time of penance for all the sins of their Nation, even from the first time they were a people, until the last destruction of Jerusalem. For since they would none of their pardon and attonement by Christ, (with respect unto whose coming God had so long spared them; for all their expiation by sacrifice looked unto him) God would not bate them an ace of the judgment they had merited, but would visit all the former sins of their Nation upon them, from the golden Calf, until their crucifying, and finally, rejecting of their Messiah.

Verse 10.

But as for the manner of the coming of this great day of

the Lord, it shall be suddenly and unawares, as a theif in the night, in which the heavens &c. with a crackling noise of fire shal pass away, & the στοιχεῖα (c) or host of them shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works thereof shall be burned.

(c) What these Heavens are, and why I render στοιχεῖα *the host of them*; and how this conflagration is to be understood, I will shew when I have done my Paraphrase.

Vers. 11, 12. *Seeing then that all these things shal be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godlinesse, to make our selves fire-proof, and such as may abide the day of refining? as namely becometh those who by faith look for, and hasten the coming of the day of the Lord, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the host of them melt with fervent heat. For our life & conversation ought to be suitable to our faith, and we are so to walk, as if that were always present which by faith we look for.*

Vers. 13. *But this conflagration ended, (whatsoever those scoffers say, who question the promise of Christs second coming) we look according to his promise Isa. 65. & 66. for a new heaven and a new earth, (that is, a new and refined state of the world) wherein righteousnesse shall dwell, according as the same Prophet saith, cap. 60. 20, 21. The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, & the dayes of thy mourning shall be ended, thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land,* or earth, *for ever.*

Vers. 14, 15, 16. *Wherefore beloved (seeing that ye look for such things at his coming) be diligent that*

that ye may be found in him in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs, & account the long-ſuffering of God, in the delay thereof to be ſalvation. Even as our beloved brother Paul *alſo (one of the Apoſtles of our Lord, who confirmeth theſe words of the holy Prophets) according to the wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you, enforcing the like exhortation unto holineſſe of life, from this our faith and experience of the Lord Jeſus his appearing to judgment, which we now make unto you:* viz. Heb. 12. 14, 28, 29. *As alſo in all his Epiſtles, ſpeaking in them of theſe things,* viz. Rom. 2. 4. coll. com. verſ. 5, 6, 7, & 1 Cor. 1, 7, 8. & 3. 13. 2 Cor. 5. 9, 10, 11. in initio, & 7. 1. Phil. 1. 10. & 2. 15, 16. & cap. 3. 10. Colloſſ. 3. 4, 5. 1 Theſſ. 2. 12. & 3. 13. denique 5. 23. 2 Theſſ. 1. 8, 11. 1 Tim. 6. 14, 15. Tit. 2. 12. 13.

How this *Conflagration* of the *world* wherof Saint PETER ſpeaks, and eſpecially of the *Heavens*, is to be underſtood.

FOr reſolution of this queſtion, I muſt premiſe ſome things, to make the way thereto the more eaſie.

R. 1. That the old Hebrew language wherein the Scripture ſpeaks, there is no one word to expreſſe the compages of the ſuperiour and inferiour bodies, which we call *Mundus*, but theſe two words *Heaven* and *Earth* (שמים וארץ) joyned to

and

and put together, onely so that when Saint *Peter* saith (the World that then was, perished by waters; but the Heavens and Earth that are now, are reserved to fire:) He might as well have said according to his meaning, The Heavens and the Earth which then were, perished by waters, as the World that now is shall by fire. For the words *Heaven* and *Earth* joyned, imply no more in the one (according to the Scriptures notion) than the single word *Mundus* or *World* doth in the other, being applyed to the history of the great deluge: as also, a *New heaven* and a *New earth* is the same notion with that in our expression, where we say a *New World*; that is to say, *Novarerum facies, novarerum conditio*; which we otherwhile apply to very small, and even particular and domestical changes, when we say, Here is a new World; which the Hebrew would or might express, Here is a new Heaven and a new Earth.

2 That it is not like that any other World, or Heaven and Earth, shall perish by fire, than such a one as heretofore perished by water: for so the *Antithesis* importeth, *viz.* The World, or Heaven and Earth that then was, perished by water, the Heaven and earth which now is, is reserved for a destruction by fire. Now the World which perished by water was no other than the sublunary World, the Heaven whereof is that which we call Aire, but the Scripture Heaven, which sublunary heaven, together with the earth, was marred by that general deluge, and the creatures belonging to them both either wholly destructed, or marvel-

marvellously corrupted from that they were before: such a World therefore, and no other Heaven and earth, shal undergo the second deluge of fire for restauration, which before suffered the deluge of water for corruption.

3 Observe also, for the better understanding of Saint *Peters* meaning, That the word στοιχεῖα which we in this place are wont to turn Elements, is not like to be understood in the notion of the Greek Doctors, whose terms and notions the Scripture useth not, but otherwise divideth the *World*. Nay further, in this place it cannot be so understood, for that the Hebrew division of the World into Heaven and Earth is here expressed, and the στοιχεῖα distinguished from them both. But when the whole world is divided into Heaven and Earth οὐρανὸς καὶ γῆ πάντα, by Earth is meant the *Earthen Globe*, which Saint *Peter* saith is ἐξ ὕδατος συνεστῶσα, and so the water and earth are both included in the sole name of *Earth*: In Heaven the Aire is included. Thus three of the Physical Elements are bestowed. The fourth is the Fire: but this is that which is to burn the ὁλοστοιχεῖα, and so none of the ὁλοστοιχεῖα to be burnt. And if any of these Elements could be exempted from this division into Heaven and Earth, besides the Fire, *viz.* the Aire, yet could not that, nor any of them alone be στοιχεῖα in Saint *Peter*; For ὁλοστοιχεῖα notes more than one. It must needs therefore be, that ὁλοστοιχεῖα here meaneth something else. Let us see if we can find out what it is. Mark then Saint *Peters* order, διὰ λόγου θεοῦ ὁλοστοιχεῖα then γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος συνεστῶσα:

By

By which correspondence it should seeme that στοιχεῖα should be some furniture belonging to *cælum*, as τὰ ἔργα are the buildings & whole furniture of *creatures* belonging to *terra*; which furniture of both, but especially that of the *Heaven* the Scripture calls צבאם *the host of them*, Gen. 2. 1. *The heavens & the earth were finished,* וכל־צבאם *and all the host of them.* LXX. ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν. Vulg. *Ornatus eorum.* Nay, seeing the whole world is nothing else but the *heaven* and the *earth*, and what is contained in them, (*i.e.*) *exercitus eorum*: and seeing *heaven* and *earth* are both here distinctly named, and τὰ ἔργα put for the host of the *earth*; it must needs be that στοιχεῖα, named as distinct things from all three, should note the host of *heaven*: And so the meaning of Saint *Peter* should be, when he saith οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ στοιχεῖα, as if he had said, οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ στοιχεῖα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, *the heavens and the host thereof*, or τὰν ἐν αὐτῷ στοιχεῖα, as he says, γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα, *the earth and the works therein.* But how, will some man say, should στοιχεῖον come to have this notion? I answer thus, The Hebrew verb צבא signifieth, *in ordine militari sto, incedo*, and so answers to the Greek verb στοιχέω, which is expounded, ἐν τάξει βαδίζω εἰμι, i.e. *in ordine militari incedo, Vide Scap. ex Etymolog.* Accordingly the LXX. render the Hebrew צבא παρατάσσομαι, i.e. *in præcinctu sto, instructa acie sto.* Now if the verb צבא signifie the same with the Greek στοιχέω, why may not the Hebrew Noune צבא (which we turn *exercitus*) be rendered στοιχεῖον; the Hellenists or Greekish Jews, as in other words so here following the Etymo-

Etymology from στίχω, & having eye more to their own native language, than to the use of Greeke. It would be long to shew in how many words they, and the Greek Scriptures written according to their Dialect, use notions wch the Greek used not, (*viz.*) respecting some conformity or other in their own tongue. The works of the learned in sacred Criticisme are of late ful of such observations, whereby many difficulties and obscurities in Scripture become clear and easie. Nevertheless the Gentile-Greeks themselves use στίχος and στοῖνος (which come of the same verbe στίχω) in the same sense we plead for, *viz.* for *ordo militaris*, Military array; why may not then the *Hellenists* (so the *Greek Jewes* are called) do so with στοιχεῖον, being for the etymology every way as fit, seeing also they are otherwise wont to permute significations from vicinity of sound.

*See th' Syrick Act. 9. 20. wher Ἑλληνισταὶ are turned *Judæi qui loquebantur Græce.*

For a further confirmation of this notion of στοιχεῖον I contend for, I will adde what I have met with to that purpose. *Schickardus*, a learned Professor of the Oriental languages, at *Tabingen*, in his *Bekinath happerushim, pag.* 44. hath discovered out of *Rambans*, or *R. Moses ben Nachmans* Preface *in Peruschat hatteroth*, two passages taken out of the Chaldee copy of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, which that *Rabbi* had seen; whereby the said *Schickard* proveth against St. *Jerome*, that the Greek is not the Original, but was translated out of Chaldee. The passages which this *Ramban* quoteth thence are *cap.* 7. 5, 6, 7. and part of the 8. And again, vers. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. In the last of which quotations, because there is in the Greek ἐνέργειαι στοιχείων, I greedily looked what word in the Caldee answered here to στοιχείων, which I found to be מזלות, which those who have skill know to signifie the Planets, 12. signes or constellations of Heaven, as being the same with the Hebrew מזלות. Στοιχεῖα therefore here are Stars and Planets,

*have since looked in the Preface of

Ramban, where I found those Chaldee passages mentioned, which the Rabbin translateth into hebrew, and for the Chaldee which answereth to ἐνέργειαν στοιχείαν he renders מעשה מלוה

which I shall not need prove to be the host of the Ethereall Heaven: yea, and perhaps too, מזמות and מזלתא are derived of the verb אזל, *ire*, as στοιχεῖον is of στεῖχω. Now we know the Scriptures make mention of three Heavens; first, the Aire or sublunary Heaven: secondly, the Ethereall and starry Heaven: thirdly, the Heaven of Glory, or Empereall Heaven. Every of these Heavens have their host or army: the host of the heaven of glory, or the third, are the Angels and blessed Spirits: the host of the Ethereall heavens are the Stars and Planets: the host of the Aereal, or sublunary heaven, are either visible, as the clouds of heaven, νεφέλαι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, and other meteors, as also the rest of the creatures mansioning therein, as the fowles of the heaven, πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ or invisible, *viz.* the wicked Spirits and Devils, whose Prince Satan, is called *the Prince of the power of the Aire, Eph.* 2.2. and his host κοσμοκράτορες, *rulers of the world*, i.e. the sublunary world; and τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, *wicked spirits in heavēly places, viz.* in the lowest or sublunary heavens, *Eph.* 6.12. And whether S. *Paul, Gal.* 4.8, 9. and *Col.* 2.8, *&c.* includes not some of those under his στοιχεῖα τοῦ κοσμου, I cannot affirme: let the learned further consider it, when namely he speaks to Gentiles; and of Gentiles, and not Jewes.

Having hitherto prepar'd the way, let us now come closer home to S. *Peter*, whose words evidently import, that some of these *heavens*, or al of them, shal suffer a conflagration at the day of Christ. Not all of them, for, who ever put the Empyreal heaven into that reckoning? And for the Ethereal heaven, he that considereth the supereminent nature and immensity thereof, and of those innumerable bodies therein, in regard of which the whole sublunary world is but a point or center; & that it no way can be proved that ever those bodies received any curse for mans sin, or contagion by the worlds deluge, or that any enemies of God

dwell

dwell in them to pollute them: he that considereth this wil not easily be induced to believe that the fire of the day of judgement should burn them. It remaineth therefore that the sublunary heavens only, with their στοιχεῖα are to be the subject of this conflagration.

These *heavens* (saith S. *Peter*) λυθήσονται, i. e. *solventur*, and their στοιχεῖα shall melt with fervent heat: It is a Metaphor taken from the refining of mettals, *quæ igne solvuntur ut purificentur*: so that οἱ οὐρανοὶ πυρούμενοι λυθήσονται, is as much as *Cæli igne adhibito conflagrabuntur*. This to be the meaning of λυθήσονται appears, because S. *Peter* himself interprets *solvi* to be *liquefieri*. For having in the tenth verse said στοιχεῖα λυθήσονται, (i.e.) *solventur*, he in the twelfth verse repeating it sayes, στοιχεῖα τηκήσεται, (i. e.) *liquefient*; Now *melting* is for refining and purifying. Nor is the word πυρούμενοι averse from this notion, the LXX. using πυρόω for the Hebrew צרף as in the Psalms more than once: *The words of the Lord are as refined silver*, LXX. ἀργύριον πεπυρωμένον, *Psal.* 12. and so elsewhere. But when the sublunary heaven shall be thus refined, even the Ethereal lights of the Stars, of the Sun and Moon, &c. will appear to those on earth much more glorious than now they do, as sending their rayes through a purer *Medium*; so that all the world to us-ward shall be as it were renewed.

As for παρελεύσονται (or *passing away*) verse 10. it is an Hebraisme, signifying any change, or going of a thing from the state wherein it was, and answers to the verbe חלף, which signifieth both *transire* and *permutari*, as עבר in Chaldianisme doth. And *Schindler* notes that Psal. 102 the Arabick for ויחלפו *mutabuntur*, hath ותעברון *transibunt*. In the twelfth verse it is expounded by λυθήσονται, but λυθήσονται I have already shewed is commuted with τηκήσονται; they therefore all three of them signifie one

and the same thing; and I see no reason why we should imagine a greater *emphasis* in παρελεύσονται for an utter abolition in the destruction by fire, than is before implyed in ἀπώλοντο, when he spake of the destruction by water: ὁ τότε κόσμος (*inquit*) ὕδατι κατοκλυσθεὶς ἀπάλετο.

But what shall become of the invisible host, which I named as part of the στοιχεῖα of this sublunary heaven, *viz.* those πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας, the army of wicked and unclean spirits: shall the fire of the last judgement touch these? I answer: Though the operation of the fire shall not be upon them to burn them, yet shall they also suffer by this fiery judgement, being thereby to be exiled and dejected from those high mansions, and bestowed in some lower place: for so that of *Jude* seemeth to imply, *The Angels* (saith he) *which kept not their first estate, but left their own* (or proper) *habitation, he hath reserved to* (be bound with) *everlasting chaines of darkuesse, at the judgement of the great day.* Vide Piscat. in hunc locum.

And this seemes to me to be the most literal and unforced exposition of this description of Saint *Peter*, of the *heaven* and *earths* conflagration at the day of Christ, and so to be preferred before any other.

But if a *Prophetical* strain or scheme may here be admitted, there is another way of explication, which yet in the conclusion will come to the same purpose the former did, although the way thereto be not the same. And certainly our Saviour in the Gospel describing the coming of this day, useth a Prophetical expression: *The Sunne* (saith he) *shall be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her light, and the Starres shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.* For if this be taken literally, whither shall the *stars* fall from *heaven*, which are either as big, or many times bigger than the globe of the earth, where shall be

room

room for them? if ſuch a ſcheme there be ſuppos'd in St. *Peters* deſcription, th'explication may be after this manner. *Mundus*, or the *World*, (to omit other particular exceptions) is according to the Scriptures uſe, either *Mundus continens*, or *Mundus contentus*, (give me leave to uſe thoſe termes for diſtinction ſake:) By *Mundus continens* I mean the compages and frame of the Phyſical *heaven* & *earth*, wherein the reſt of the creatures are conteined: By *Mundus contentus*, the ſtate or body of the inhabitants or Kingdoms of the earth. Now to whatſoever the notion of *Mundus* is appliable, there is alſo ſuppoſed to be an heaven and earth, as being the names and parts whereby the Scriptures expreſs the *World*. The *heaven* then of this *Political world* is the ſovereignty or ſovereign part thereof, whoſe hoſt and ſtars are the powers ruling in the *World*: In the higheſt place *Gods* and *Idols*; next, *Kings*, *Princes*, *Peers*, *Counſellours*, *Magiſtrates*, and other ſuch lights ſhining in the Firmament. And at ſuch a meaning and no other (it being an Oriental notion) may aime (for ought I can ſee) that ſuppoſed faſtuous ſtyle of *Sapores* King of *Perſia* to *Conſtantius* the Emperour; *Rex Regum Sapores, frater ſolis & lunæ, particeps* (i.e. *ſocius*) *ſyderum, Conſtantio fratri ſalutem*. But to go on: *Earth* is the *Peazantry* or *vulgus hominum*, together with the terreſtrial creatures ſerving the uſe of man. Of ſuch an Heaven, as this is, the Lord ſpeaketh in the Propheſie of *Haggai*, cap. 2. v. 6. *Yet once it is a little while, and I will ſhake all Nations, and the deſire of all Nations ſhall come*. And again *v.* 21. *I will ſhake the heavens and the earth, and I will overthrow the throne of Kingdoms, and I will deſtroy the ſtrength of the Kingdoms of the Heathen, &c.* Of ſuch an heaven and earth ſpeaketh *Jeremy*, c. 4. v. 23. *I beheld the earth, and it was without form and void,* (תהו ובהו) *and the heavens, & they had no light: viz.* as if the World were turn'd into the old Chaos again, *Gen.* cap. 1. See the reſt

reſt which followeth. Of ſuch Heavens & Earth ſpeaketh the Lord in *Eſay*, cap. 51. v. 15, 16. namely, of the Heavens and Earth of the World, or ſtate of Iſrael. *I am* (ſaith he) *the Lord thy God, who divided the ſea,* (to wit, the Red ſea) *when the waters thereof roared; the Lord of Hoſts in his name: And put my Word* (i.e. my Law) *in thy mouth, and covered thee in the ſhadow of my hand,* (i. e. protected thee in thy march to Canaan) *that I might plant the Heavens, and lay the foundations of the Earth,* (i. e. make thee a State, and build thee into a Political World) *and ſay unto Sion, thou art my people.* Of ſuch a kind of Heaven ſpeaks the ſame Prophet, cap. 34. v. 2, 4, 5. *The indignation of the Lord is upon all Nations, and his fury upon all their Armies, &c. And all the Hoſt of Heaven ſhall be diſſolved, and the Heavens ſhall be rolled together as a ſcroll, and their hoſt ſhall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the Vine, and as a falling figge from the figge-tree. For my ſword ſhall be bathed in Heaven: Behold it ſhall come down on Idumea, &c.* See the reſt, & know that this deſtruction of Edom is propheſied of in no leſſe hyperbolical a ſtrain by *Obadiah*, and *Jeremy* cap. 49. from v. 7. to 22. *Ezek.* 35. v. 4. & 25. 12. which I note, leſt any man wondering at the *hyperbole* of this of *Eſay*, ſhould think it appliable only to the day of judgement. And that ſuch ſchemes as theſe were uſual to the Nations of the Orient, may appear not only by the Chymical Philoſophy derived thence, (which makes heaven & earth & ſtars in every thing) but from the teſtimony of *Moſes Maimonides*, who (*more Nebochim part. 2. cap. 29.*) affirms that the Arabians in his time in their vulgar ſpeech, when they would expreſs that a man was fallen into ſome great calamity or adverſity, uſed to ſay, *Cœlum ejus ſuper terram ejus cecidit:* Compare *Lament. 2. 1.* No queſtion theſe ſchemes were as familiar to them, as our Poets ſtrains and expreſſions are to us, though of another *genius*: Ours are borrowed from fables, ſtories,

ſtories, places; theirs, more from the frame of the World, the Sunne, Moon, Stars, and Elements, &c.

If ſuch a notion of *Cœlum* and *Terra* may have place in this place of *Peter*, (and why may he not uttering a Propheſie borrow a Poetical ſtrain?) it may eaſily appear what Heaven and Earth the fire at Chriſts ſecond coming ſhall burn up and conſume, *viz.* the heaven and the earth of the contained world, ſuch as thoſe which the former judgement by water over-whelmed and deſtroyed; the World of wicked ſtates and men, high ones & low ones, princes and peſants, man & beaſt; according to that twice repeated paſſage, *Eſay* 2.11,17. (which the ancient Jewes interpreted of the day of judgement) *The loftineſſe of man ſhall be bowed down, & the haughtineſſe of men ſhall be made low, & the Lord alone ſhal be exalted that day: And the Idols* (theſe are part of the hoſt of heaven we ſpeak of) *he ſhal utterly aboliſh.* And of ſuch heavens and στοιχεῖα as theſe, it mattereth not though we underſtand an abſolute deſtruction (*viz.* of ſo much as ſhall be burned) as was in the deluge of *Noah.* And ſo likewiſe of the earth and works thereof. But whereas by the univerſal deluge, though only the *Mundus contentus* periſhed, yet notwithſtanding the *Mundus continens* was therewith corrupted and depraved: In the deſtruction of fire it ſhall be otherwiſe; for the world of wicked ones being deſtroyed, the Heaven and the Earth which contained them ſhall be purged and refined, for the righteous to dwell therein. This Expoſition I put but in the ſecond place, becauſe where the proper ſenſe of the letter may be kept, I prefer it before any other. See the Apoſtaſie of the latter times

To conclude, if any there yet be, whom neither of the former expoſitions can ſatisfie, but will needs have the fire and burning here ſpoken of, to be that wherby the World is to be utterly annihilated; I could anſwer, that the day of

of judgement is a thousand yeers; and this fire, though it be to be ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κυρίου, *in that day*, yet shall it not be in the beginning, but end thereof; the beginning being but a destruction of the enemies of Christ, and the Kingdome of Satan, and then a restauration: The end, a destruction of the whole creature it self by utter annihilation; and then St. *Peters* words, ver. 13. to be construed after this manner, *That howsoever the Heavens and the Earth shall at length be dissolved by fire, nevertheless before that shall be, we look for a new Heaven and a new Earth* (i. e. a new World or restauration) *to precede this abolition, according to his promise*, Esay 65. & 66.

But such an exposition, me thinks, would not suit so well with that which I take to be St. *Peters* chiefest scope in this passage, nor with the words of the holy Prophets he poynteth at; which seem to speak only of such a fire, which should precede a restauration, and not of that which should cause an utter abolition of the World. And as concerning such an utter abolition of the whole frame of Heaven and Earth, after the Oeconomy of the Redemption & victory of Christ shall be finished, it seemeth to me a mystery which hath no bottome. Howsoever, I am not perswaded this place of St. *Peter* should mean any such thing. Those passages, *Job* 14. 12, *Psal.* 102. 26. and *Apoc.* 20. 11, may seem to be of more moment. And if any such annihilation shall be, it stands more with reason it should be by the immediate power of God, without the instrument of any creature, than by fire; and that he who at first brought it out of nothing without any creatures help, should reduce it to nothing again without the help of any creature.

Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ τῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν.